

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for making retaining net knots, wherein a knot comprises a first and a second rope crossing over each other and a junction binding said ropes in a given crossover area,

the method comprising the steps of:

placing a first U element and a second U element positioned side-by-side astride said first rope, each with the same orientation at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter so that they lie close to said second rope on opposite sides thereof;

linking ends of the first U element to ends of the second U element by means of at least one bridge element overlying said second rope; and

clamping said at least one bridge element on said second rope,

wherein, during the clamping step, the ropes press each other at their crossover area, because of the displacement of contacting rope strands, reducing the overall thickness of the first and second ropes pressed together to 1 to 4/3 of the rope diameter in such a way that the ropes are forced to lie substantially in the same plane at each knot of the net, and

wherein the curvature of the curved bases is semicircular, with an intrados radius of approximately one half the rope diameter.

2. (Currently amended) A knot of a retaining net of the type comprising a first and a second rope crossing over each other and a junction for binding the ropes together, wherein said junction comprises:

a first U element and a second U element positioned side-by-side astride said first rope, with equally oriented wings at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter so that they lie close to the second rope on opposite sides thereof;

at least one bridge element linking ends of the wings of the first U element to adjacent ends of the wings of the second U element, and overlying the second rope; and

clamping means for clamping said at least one bridge element on the second rope,
wherein the bridge element comprises an arch which merges with the adjacent ends of the first and second U elements and is integral with the first and second U elements to form a unique piece, and

wherein said unique piece has a given distance measured between a tangent line at an intrados of an arch of the bridge element and the plane defined by tangent lines at the intrados of curved bases of the first U element and the second U element, ~~and~~

wherein said given distance is between 1 and 4/3 of the rope diameter, and
wherein the curvature of the curved bases of the first and second U elements is semicircular,
with an intrados radius of approximately one half of the rope diameter.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said bridge element comprises a yoke linking an end of a wing of the first U element to an adjacent end of a wing of the second U element.

6. (Previously presented) The knot according to claim 2, wherein the clamping means comprise two nuts screwing on the ends of two wings of said U elements.

7. (Previously presented) The knot according to claim 2, wherein the clamping means comprise two heads formed through riveting, the heads corresponding to the ends of two wings of said U elements.

8. (Currently amended) A junction for binding two ropes together in a knot of a retaining net, the junction comprising:

a first U element and a second U element, positioned side-by-side and equally oriented, at a distance from one another approximately equal to the rope diameter;

~~at least one bridge element linking ends of the wings of the first U element to adjacent ends of the wings of the second U element, and~~

at least one bridge element linking the ends of the first U element to the adjacent ends of the second U element, used to close the U elements, and

clamping means of said at least one bridge element,

wherein the at least one bridge element comprises an arch which merges with the adjacent ends of the first and second U elements and is integral with the first and second U elements to form a unique piece,

wherein said unique piece has a given distance measured between a tangent line at an intrados of an arch of the bridge element and the plane defined by tangent lines at the intrados of curved bases of the first U element and the second U element, ~~and~~

wherein said given distance is between 1 and 4/3 of the rope diameter, and
wherein the curvature of the curved bases of the first and second U elements is semicircular, with an intrados radius of approximately one half of the rope diameter.

9-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) The junction according to claim 8, wherein the clamping means comprise two nuts screwing on the ends of two wings of said U elements.

13. (Previously presented) The junction according to claim 8, wherein the clamping means comprise two heads formed through riveting, the heads corresponding to the ends of two wings of said U elements.

14-15. (Cancelled)